

Landslide

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Summary: A prediction for the future of the world of Pokemon. PG for angst/depression. A/N expanded on 1/20/01

Landslide

> <meta name="Author"> Landslide A/N: First of all: If you don't like songfic, go read something else! This story is based on (and named after) a song by Fleetwood Mac. All right? All right.

>Well, we know that PokÃ©mon's popularity will fade someday.

Hopefully, not for a VERY long time, but it will happen :-(, and here are my ideas on what could happen when that time comes . . .

[Note Added on 1/20/01:When I wrote this story, PokÃ©mon Gold and Silver didn't exist yet. That's why I made up a name for the mysterious bird. (I'm amazed at how accurately I predicted its type!)]

It was the dawning of an overcast, windy autumn day. When Ash Ketchum woke up and looked out his bedroom window, he thought, _Depressing weather in a depressing world . . ._

He stood up, got dressed, and nudged Pikachu to waken it. It climbed slowly onto Ash's shoulder. Together, they went downstairs to the kitchen, where Ash's mother was serving breakfast.

"Good morning," she said. Just as she had for some time now, she sounded rather listless and tired. "What's on the agenda for today?"

"Nothing," answered Ash.

His mom sighed. Her Mr. Mime stepped up and gave Ash a look that said, "C'mon, sonny, cheer up." Ash returned the smile, but said nothing.

"I'm going for a walk," said Ash, when breakfast was over. He collected his hat and satchel of PokÃ©balls.

"Be home in time for dinner," said his mom, as he was leaving. Then she thought, Why'd I say that? An 18-year-old doesn't need parents ordering him around. I wish he'd leave and get his own life . . . again.

I hate my life, Ash thought for a moment as he walked alone down the road. He quickly decided that no, his life overall hadn't been so bad; it was just in a slump right now.

Ash had been the undisputed PokÃ©mon Master for several years. What fantastic years they had been! He'd collected many powerful PokÃ©mon, and in addition to being famous, he had been loved by all for his support of newer PokÃ©mon trainers. When at last he had been bested by one such trainer, he had decided to work towards becoming a PokÃ©mon League official.

And then, about halfway through his job training, his world had mysteriously changed. First, there had been a sharp drop in PokÃ©mon training and competition, and no one knew why. Soon after that, the focus of both science and media had shifted from PokÃ©mon to "the frontiers," such as space. In spite of that, there was a constant feeling of ennui and depression over the land. Few people were really interested in anything anymore, and they wondered why.

Slowly, silently, Ash threw one of his many Pokeballs to the ground. Out came good old Charizard.

"Let's go to the old Plateau, Charizard," said Ash, climbing onto its back.

Some time later, Charizard landed in the middle of Indigo Plateau. Ash was surprised at what he saw there.

The arena and the hills around it were coated with an inch or two of snow. Even more striking was the fact that he was totally alone. It was the weekend, so no one was working there, but even the usual crowd of tourists and gawkers was nowhere to be seen! Oh, no . . . the lack of Pokemon interest must be getting worse . . .

He started to walk around the arena, reminiscing.

"Well, I've been afraid of changes_
>'Cause I've built my life around you,
>But time makes you bolder, even children get older,
>I'm gettin' older, too . . .

Suddenly, Charizard cried out. A strange sight greeted Ash when he turned around.

The air next to Charizard was shimmering. The shimmer gradually formed into a door shape, from which emerged a shadowy figure.

When the shimmer dissolved, so did the shadow. The figure was revealed to be a woman, apparently in her late twenties. She was wearing jeans and a T-shirt with a picture of a Charmander on it and, in blue-and-yellow type:

POKEMON

>Gotta catch 'em all!

The woman and Ash were equally surprised to see each other. Finally, she said, "Are you Ash?"

"Yes."

"You look different . . . I guess you got older, too."

"Huh? I don't think I knew you when I was younger . . ."

"No, but I knew you . . . Look, this is kind of hard to explain, and you may not believe me . . ."

"Tell me." Ash was now interested, and grateful to find out something new.

The lady reached into her purse and pulled out a book. She handed it to Ash, who was amazed to see his 10-year-old self pictured on the cover.

He paged through the book, realizing that it was a very accurate account of his very first training experiences, on the day he got Pikachu. He grew more amazed every moment.

When he finished, he closed the book slowly and asked the woman, "How could this be? How could somebody know that much about what I've done?"

"Well," she said, "it's a long story, so, uh, pull up a chair."

"Okay. Charizard, return." They went out of the stadium and found a bench to sit on near the PokÃ©mon center.

"Here's the story," said the woman. "My name is Karen Greene. When I was nine, I saw my big brother playing a video game called PokÃ©mon.

"When I got my hands on it, I was instantly hooked. I beat the game, and I knew the names of every PokÃ©mon, and most of their stats -"

"So, in this game, you were a PokÃ©mon trainer?" asked Ash.

"Yeah."

"Well, why didn't you just go out and do it for real?"

"I couldn't. I wanted to, badly - so did my brother - but we couldn't. PokÃ©mon . . . don't exist in our world."

"Your world?"

"Yes, that's the hard-to-believe part. The fact is that this world, which people in my world call PokÃ©world, was created by people in my world - primarily by a man named Satoshi Tajiri."

"Satoshi? That's my middle name!"

"It figures. The PokÃ©mon video game, and the TV show and card game based on it, and the movies and all the toys and stuff - they were all done in two languages, English and Japanese. Therefore, English-speakers call you Ash, but Japanese-speakers call you Satoshi."

"There are TV shows and card games and movies and toys?" Oh, my!

"Yes, and what's more, they were all about you. That's why I recognized you; you were always the main character - well, except in the card game. Still, you're a special person, someone every kid in my world wanted to be. You and all the PokÃ©mon there are were adored by kids everywhere."

By now, Ash was really confused. "Then, is my life just a thought? Something someone made up? Something people watched for entertainment?" Maybe this was how the newly-cloned Mewtwo had felt?

"Well," answered Karen, "your world was made up, and you were watched from the beginning of your training until you became a Master, but please don't let that get you down. You brought your fans together, gave us something to hold on to as we grew up. Sometimes, you even taught us stuff, about friendship and loyalty. You actually meant quite a lot to us."

"I had no idea . . . That made me feel a lot better, thanks."

"Oh, don't mention it, it's a huge honor just to meet you."

"That reminds me, how did you get here?"

"I'm not really sure. I put one of my old PokÃ©mon videos in the VCR, and as soon as it started playing, the air around me shimmered. I tried to stand up and get away, but it felt like it was pulling on me. Then everything went gray, and then I was here."

"Hmmm, I wonder what could have caused it . . ."

They puzzled over it for a minute. Then Karen said, "Well, I was watching a PokÃ©mon video when it happened . . ."

"You're probably not in the video, if that's what you thought," said Ash. "Aren't I a little kid in that video?"

"Yes, and the transition didn't involve my TV, so that's not it."

She thought about it a little more, then said, "I think I've got it . . . and that brings me to the ending of my story, too."

"What is it?" Ash asked her.

"I think I came here because the barrier between my world and PokÃ©world is getting weaker. And that's happening because people in my world are getting tired of PokÃ©mon."

"What? How? You told me how important it was to you -"

"When we were younger," Karen explained. "All those kids who adored PokÃ©mon so much are grown up now, so they don't really care about PokÃ©mon anymore - and the new generation of children don't know about it at all. PokÃ©mon lovers are a dying breed. It's sad, really."

"Maybe that has something to do with what's happening here, in PokÃ©world," said Ash. "People here are losing interest in PokÃ©mon, too. That's why this place is so empty. Nobody cares."

"This is Indigo Plateau, right?"

"Right. And there's more. Everyone around here has been so depressed since they started losing interest in PokÃ©mon. That isn't what caused it, though, and we don't know what did."

"You know now," said Karen. "You're depressed because my world has forgotten about you."

"Uh-huh," said Ash. "So, to sum it all up: Your world created mine, my world is going down the tubes because people in your world have forgotten about my world, and now people can cross over between the two worlds because of that?"

"That's about the size of it," Karen confirmed, "but I think I'm the first to cross over, and you apparently can't cross over at will. There may be more old fans like me showing up soon."

"Well," said Ash, "there's another big first for me."

"Mmmmm. Me too."

Suddenly, Ash and Karen heard a low rumble.

". . . Climbed a mountain and I turned around,
>And I saw my reflection in the snow-covered hills

>Till a landslide brought it down . . ."

Moments later, the plateau began to shake.

"Earthquake!" shouted Ash. "Charizard, Fearow, come out! Get us out of here!"

Karen didn't even need to be told what to do. Charizard and Fearow carried Ash and Karen respectively to the tops of some trees on higher ground.

Looking back in the direction of the plateau, Ash thought he saw something. It could have been light reflecting off the snow, or it could have just been his imagination, but he saw his own reflection in the snow. It wasn't a normal reflection, either. It was more like pictures of everything he'd ever done, the good and bad alongside each other.

Just as Ash was starting to enjoy this novel experience, the rumbling grew to a crescendo, and the reflection was gone.

So were the hills.

So was most of Indigo Plateau.

In less than a minute, the place where generation after generation of Pokemon trainers had battled for the highest of honors was reduced to rubble. Ash realized that he had witnessed the greatest tragedy in the history of modern PokÃ©mon training. His feelings at that moment, he was sure, were all the defeat and despair he had dealt with in the past eight years - multiplied by about twenty. Even at age eighteen, he couldn't help crying just a little bit.

Gradually, he noticed that Karen was having the same reaction. He turned to her and said, "Well, I guess that's it. It's all over now."

Karen sniffed and said, "No. PokÃ©mon and their training will always be. All it takes is us few old fans over in that other world. When I get home, I'm going to work to reunite us PokÃ©mon fans. We will help you out of your slump."

"But you don't even know when you're going home. Or if."

"That's true. Oh well, it might be fun to live here for a while."

"Don't expect any warm welcomes . . ."

"I know. Hey, there's a few things I've been wanting to ask you . . ."

"Oh, mirror in the sky, what is love?"

Ash and Karen were now sitting under the tree.

"Did you ever get Misty a new bike?" asked Karen.

"Of course!" said Ash, chuckling at the memory. "It was the first thing I did after becoming a PokÃ©mon Master."

Karen smiled back, then turned a bit more serious. "Do you still like her?"

"What?"

"Well, I thought you'd start a relationship sometime. You were meant for each other, you know."

"We were?"

"Oh, absolutely. In fact, one night, Misty wrote an entire song about how she was afraid to tell you she loved you."

Ash blushed. "Well, we were together for some time in our teenage years, but then when the depression started . . ."

"Mmmm. Well, I think you should tell her you still love her. It'd probably make you both a lot happier if you got back together."

"How should I tell her?"

"I think writing to her would be easiest."

"Okay . . ."

"Great, so here's the other thing I was wondering about: Remember that mysterious bird PokÃ©mon you saw on your first day of training?"

"Yeah."

>"Did you ever find out what it was?" <p>

Ash smiled. "See for yourself."

Standing up, he threw out another Pokeball. What came out was unlike anything Karen had ever seen.

It was the mysterious bird PokÃ©mon. It was around four feet high and had beautiful gold feathers. It was as majestic in person as it had been when it had been spotted flying over the rainbow eight years ago.

"This is Aunago," said Ash. "I call it Rainbow, because that's where I saw it first."

"Wow, you're lucky . . . I'm sure it's the only one of its kind, huh?"

"That's right."

"What type is it?"

"Good question. It seems to be comfortable with almost any attack. Right now, it uses mostly Flying and Fire attacks, but it's shown some Psychic powers once in a while."

"What a great PokÃ©mon! See, Ash, you have plenty to be happy about. You're the world's only Aunago trainer, you've been a PokÃ©mon master, and you have a girlfriend."

"Well, not yet . . . Let's go, Rainbow!"

"Where to?" asked Karen as Ash mounted his PokÃ©mon.

"I'm going home to write that letter to Misty. Wanna come?"

"Of course!"

As Rainbow carried them away, Ash said to Karen, "I'm so glad you came along. Thanks for everything. Maybe with you around, I can pull PokÃ©world out of this slump!"

Ash and Karen both realized it: When Ash had said that, he had sounded as enthusiastic, determined, and optimistic as he had on so many occasions when he was younger. They both laughed openly, and Karen said, "Some things never change. And that's a good thing."

Disclaimer: Karen and the name Aunago are the only things in this

story that belongs to me. Everything else belongs to Nintendo,
Creatures, Gamefreak, et al. I write about them because it's fun. :-)

End
file.